

# *Sketch*

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*Volume 7, Number 3*

1941

*Article 4*

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## Strange Damask

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its warmth. It was as though I had stepped from a closed, chilled room, and I was grateful for the sun upon me.

Ahead, the Pacific spread away, blue-gray, to a hazy horizon. Its vastness was a feeling, not a picture. Here was space in which to stretch my soul. On this shore-line time was held, prisoner. From the repetition of the waves, lapping, whispering, came an endless peace.

Through the crush of hurried campus days, I had ached to clear my mind, to look a long distance without ceasing. Here I found solace in the wind, the gold-beige sand, the quivering water. Somewhere in that far-away blue-greyness was serenity.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE town, a clump of dirty box buildings, huddled in the twilight. Long docks leading out to sea dwarfed the town. I wanted to remain quietly a part of the flatness. From a corner of the harbor a red toy boat steamed silently out to sea, pulled through the water by an unseen string. I stepped forward, then back, to evade the stealthy waves. Rippling up to my toes, then retreating, the water left a dark stain in the smooth sand.

\* \* \* \* \*

Rain drizzled along the muddy road that clung close to Sitka Bay. The crescent harbor, etched beneath a rose-grey sky, was an outpost by the sullen sea. Through the angry channels, around bulky dark islands, across interminable miles, icy water stretched to the shores of Russia. Dulled in its mist, its only color in subtle greys, the bay whispered to me with the soft wet sounds of a shrouded mystery.

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## Strange Damask

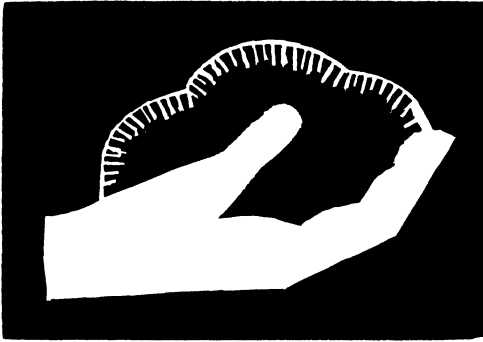
*Frances Foster*

Chem. T. Sr.

What has gone into the weaving of this furiously  
striped pattern of existence?  
How have the threads been twisted,  
how has warp bitten into woof,  
that a light, shifting on the iridescent moment  
turns it dark, and makes it neighbor bright?

How has the fabric been stretched,  
to what harp-tight exactitude,  
that the bright strings are stirred into singing,  
and a cry from the smouldering darkness  
has broken a thread?

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## A Handful of Mud

*Richard Mason*

Sci. Sr.

THE white heat of noontime poured its brilliance over the ten neatly cultivated acres of Manney Corbett. Broad fuzzy tobacco leaves spread outward in graceful symmetry from every stalk in the long rows.

Manney shuffled along the green rows, moving his hands quickly and deftly over each plant. He yanked off blossoms and new shoots so that the leaves would grow more quickly, for big leaves meant just that much more money. No work was too hot or too dirty that might make a few extra dollars for Manney and his family.

His long gray-blue overalls, which had been patched and re-patched, were wrapped tightly around his ankles and tied with twine to keep the soft dust from sifting into his shoe tops. Manney did this by habit, for his shoes were well ventilated with cracks and holes, but a white man couldn't be expected to go barefooted like a nigger.

His hands were covered with the sticky brownish, bitter-smelling sap of the plant. As his blackened fingers worked, his mind made plans and discussed them pro and con.